DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 811 UD 030 730

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TITLE	Culture, Politics, and Irish School Dropouts. Constructing Political Identities. Critical Studies in Education and Culture Series.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-89789-439-1; ISSN-1064-8615
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	198p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Bergin & Garvey, Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007 ($49.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Culture; Dropout Research; *Dropouts; Foreign Countries; *Identification (Psychology); Life Events; Models; *Politics; Secondary Education; *Student Attitudes; Theories; Urban Problems; Urban Schools; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS	Identity Formation; *Ireland; Poststructuralism

ABSTRACT

The everyday lives and the cultural identities of early school-leavers in the Republic of Ireland are explored, drawing up a political practice, a cultural politics, that relates to the position of early school-leavers. This practice is theorized within a poststructuralist and post-Marxist framework. Part 1 presents conversations with urban early school-leavers, organized around how they represent their experience of schooling, how they view leaving school in retrospect, and their current material and social situations. Part 2 argues that early school-leavers occupy a subordinate position in terms of material well-being. Sociological theories of reproduction and resistance are explored and applied to the experiences in Part 1. Part 3 constructs a discourse of social change without transcending the realities early school-leavers experience. A cultural, political, and educational strategy is presented for work with, by, and for early school-leavers. Theories of radical social democracy and theories of cultural production provide a transformative theoretical framework from which the issue of early school-leaving can be moved beyond the current crisis of political space. (Contains 136 references.) (SLD)

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